

**VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Room 11, Vermont State House, Montpelier
October 21, 2008**

The State Board of Education shall sustain a vision of high skills, creative thinking, and love of knowledge and learning for every student by setting education policy that ensures student achievement in a safe and healthy learning environment.

Approved Minutes – October 21, 2008

Present

Board Members: Chair Tom James; Vice-Chair Ruth Stokes; Chris Robbins; Brian Vachon; Bill Corrow; Kathy Larsen; Alex Melville; Tess Savage; Susan Schill; Fayneese Miller

DOE: Acting Commissioner Bill Talbott; Bill Romond; Mark Oettinger; Jill Remick; Carol King; Tina Muncy; Gail Taylor; Matt Raymond; John Fischer, Kay Charron; Carol Duley; David White;

Others: Sherry Gile, VT-NEA; Chip Evans, Vermont Workforce Development Council (VWDC); Rick Hilton, Lyndon Institute and Vermont Independent Schools Association (VISA); Jackie Twiggs, ACT; David Ruff, Great Schools Partnership; Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA); Retta Dunlap, Vermonters for a Better Education (VBE)

Preliminaries

Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Tom James, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. He led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item B: Roll Call and Introductions

Board members introduced themselves, as did others in attendance.

Item C: Public to be Heard

John O’Kane, Chair of the Vermont Workforce Development Council (VWDC), came before the Board to share the mission of the council and how they can work together. The VWDC’s mission is to ensure that Vermonters have the skills they need to get and keep good jobs, and that employers have employees that allow them to stay competitive in this ever-changing world. The majority of the council members are business managers, appointed by the governor, as well as state agency heads, including the commissioner of education, and representatives from the higher education sector. Their mission has expanded with Act 46, the Next Generation Act. They find that their mission and the Board’s missions overlap with public education goals. He requested to be scheduled at future meetings to ensure cooperation and collaboration.

Chip Evans, executive director of the council, updated the Board on Act 46, the Next Generation Act. Essentially the goals of the Act are split between workforce development and college scholarships. They sponsor workforce training, adult education, grants to companies, higher education. This includes a workforce internship program at the cost of \$500k a year. They

provide internships between schools, colleges and employers, to keep students in Vermont and prepare them for the future workforce. Eighteen to 20 high schools are currently participating and regional workforce boards receive grants to assist these internships. The career and alternative workforce category, allows for career exploration, and alternative and intensive technical education, which is a direct response to testimony from students at all parts of the spectrum who want to participate in technical education programs but can't. They also fund \$250k for alternative programs like the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp. Additionally, \$400k in Next Generation funds are used for adult education. Essentially the council spends several million dollars on this effort and wants to work more strategically; they want to work with the Board as they have overlapping missions.

Evans noted that they are currently working with Dave White at the department and that they have connections with employers and training organizations that the department doesn't have. O'Kain noted that the beauty of this program is that they can do this in targeted areas rather than statewide, which is more strategic and effective. The council wants the state to be a Petri dish to try some successes, expanding on current programs. They have many successes they can share.

Vermont National Guard Brigadier General John Farnham spoke to the Board regarding opportunities to share stories on programs like STARBASE and technical center programs. Currently there are 3,700 men and women in the Guard. Bg. General Farnham is looking for opportunities to collaborate with the Board and the department, especially as part of the Transformation initiative.

Item D: Announcements, Board Member Updates (Chair, Board Members)

Kathy Larsen told the Board about the 10/17 surprise ceremony for the Milken Educator Awardee, Shannon Lamb, at Kindle Farm School in Newfane.

Fayneese Miller spoke about the Inner Mongolia performance at the UVM recital hall that evening. This group spends their time at Leland and Grey as part of the Asian studies outreach program. She also shared that tomorrow will be the Outstanding Teacher Day at UVM at Davis Center; also, in the morning is the Youth Summit, at which youth from across the state will be talking about education in Vermont.

Brian Vachon attended the annual National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) meeting on behalf of the Board. He handed out the list of opportunities for study groups for the Board's consideration from that meeting. Carol King added that two of the documents from last year's study groups were about secondary school reform and Learning to Work, Working to Learn, which is closely related to the Transformation initiative.

Chair James noted that on October 14 in Middlebury he attended the Vermont Rule of Law Conference.

Item E: September Monthly Report (Chair James)

Tom James, Chair reminded the audience that the Board releases a monthly report to communicate what is going on with the Board. It is available at <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html>.

Item F: Commissioner's Update (Bill Talbott, Acting Commissioner)

Bill Talbott updated the Board on the Transformation Summit which happened at the end of September. The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Science results were released then as well, so he updated the Board on that release. He noted the difference between the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the NECAP exam.

He also noted that the department is ready to respond to a previous inquiry about the NECAP testing and using the ACT or SAT as part of the testing program. Department staff are ready to answer that query and the issue is likely to be taken back up on a later meeting agenda.

He also discussed the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union special education audit letter that expressed concern and frustration with the state's special education audit and funding system.

Talbott told the Board that he will be on vacation from November 6 – 17. The CCSO conference is during that time in Austin, TX – Bill Romond will go in his stead.

He also noted the Milken Educator Award ceremony was a real joy at the Kindle Farm School in Newfane.

Action Items

Item G: Consent Agenda**

Document(s): Consent Agenda items

Motion: Chris Robbins moved, Susan Schill seconded, to approve the consent agenda with comment.

1. **Minutes of September 16, 2008 SBE Meeting**
2. **Minutes of October 8, 2008 SBE Special Meeting**
3. **Independent School Approval** (Pat Pallas Gray; Kerry Garber)
Renewal of Kindergarten Independent School Approval:
 - Saxon Hill School, Jericho, VT; grade K

Accreditation Acknowledgement:

- Central Vermont Academy, Barre, VT; grades K-12
- Forrest Ward Memorial School, Bennington, VT; grades 1-8
- Green Mountain Christian School, Rutland, VT; grades 1-8
- St. Johnsbury Seventh-Day Adventist School, St. Johnsbury, VT; grades 1-8
- Stratton Mountain School, Stratton, VT; grades 7-12; grades 7-12
- Mountain School Program of Milton Academy, Vershire, VT; grades 11 & 12
- Bishop John S. Marshall School, Morrisville, VT; grades K-8
- Christ the King, Burlington, VT; grades K-8
- Christ the King, Rutland, VT; grades K-8
- Good Shephard Catholic School, St. Johnsbury; grades K-8
- St. Francis Xavier School, Winooski, VT; grades K-8
- St. Joseph School, Burlington, VT; grades K-8

Renewal of Special Education Independent School Approval:

- Greenwood School, Putney, VT; male students nine to fourteen years of age

Renewal of Distance Learning School Approval:

- Oak Meadow School, Brattleboro, VT; grades K-12

School Closure Acknowledgement:

- Mountain View Community School, Rutland, VT
- Rutland Academy, Rutland, VT

Independent School Program Change Acknowledgement:

- Renaissance School, closing of Williston campus

Tutorial Program Closure Acknowledgement:

- Sand Hill Program, Castleton, VT.

4. School Breakfast Award Reimbursement Authority (Jo Busha; Mark Oettinger)

5. Ed Flex Waiver Request: Essex North Supervisory Union (Kerry Garber, David Baroudi)

Comments included Kathy Larsen bringing attention to the good information within the items. Brian Vachon made a comment about the Rutland Academy and the use of the phrase “learning disabilities and other health impairment” when in fact that encompasses many things and that it is a generalization. He prefers the term “learning differences.” Talbott explained that the federal law uses those terms and that is the terminology used for this approval. Vachon also questioned Sand Hill – we need those places to be helpful and not jail-like, so he would hate to see the educational portion of that facility lost. James commented on the September Minutes discussion regarding contacting the gubernatorial candidates re: Transformation – it should read a 7-0 vote, not 9-0, because Fayneese and Tom were out. The motion was approved unanimously (9-0).

Item O*: Commissioner Search Process Update** (SBE)

Stokes moved, Robbins seconded that the Board enter executive session, including Carol King, Mark Oettinger and Matt Raymond, at 10:16 a.m. The motion was approved unanimously (9-0). No action was taken.

The Board called the regular meeting back to order at 11:20 a.m.

Transformation of Education

Item J: Education Summit Update (Tom James, Ruth Stokes, Bill Talbott, Bill Romond, David Ruff)

Talbott explained that the Summit (Grafton Institute, 9/25 and 26) met his expectations – he only wished that they could have some sort of statement or vision that they could sign off on. Bill Romond then spoke to the Board on Transformation. David Ruff, who facilitated the Summit, spoke and will go before the Board later in the meeting. Romond explained that there are four parts for today’s discussion – the Summit update; the legislation, rules and regulations; David White and John Fischer will talk about Career and Technical Education and the connection to transformation; and fourth, Ruff will lead the Board through a visioning exercise to get a sense of the Summit outcomes.

Summit Update: Brian O’Regan video-taped parts of the Summit which is available for viewing. One document the Board received was an analysis of the Board’s document by the Summit participants. Robbins questioned why cost was not discussed, and what things the schools won’t have to do in order to more efficiently deliver education to the students. Romond

has been visiting school districts across the state, in Chittenden and Caledonia Counties most recently, to discuss transformation. Larsen questioned if the term Transformation was getting in the way. Romond explained that they viewed it in a positive manner recognizing that the current system is very good but that in light of the 21st century skills a transformation is needed.

The second document was a survey administered to the participants after the Summit. The third document was a draft report prepared by Doug Wilhelm meant to be a summary report of the proceedings. It will be a draft until participants have time to review it, and it may be approved officially by the Board at the next meeting. Romond pointed out who in the room participated in the Summit.

David Ruff spoke to the Board to share thoughts about the Summit. He was struck by the commonality of purpose and commitment from the people in the room, by the commitment to kids and to rethinking the system. He found this exciting because Vermont already has done so well. While there was a level of tension around “living with the ambiguity”, it was tempered by a high level of need to get something done. There was a desire for connection to community. Ruff told the Board that attendees at the Summit were a smart and thoughtful group. Some things to think about: the notion of movement and commitment; how do you get organizations to work together, as a single group, but the Board cannot do this. Transformation will take a broader coalition of people that don’t need to be in lockstep, but do need to be heading toward the same goal. It cannot just be the Board’s initiative, but Vermont’s as a state. What is the role of the various organizations? They need the commitment of the field. Re: Cost question – the money you have is what you have, there may be some cost shifts, but long term it has to fit into the budget we have, which means identifying what we can let go. Re: the term Transformation – it isn’t the term, but how you get there. Simply changing the name will not change the concerns, but we have to strategically acknowledge the good work being done and move forward with what we need to do.

Stokes commented that Nick Donohue of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation was impressed with the caliber of the people there, and the willingness to recognize that we need to change how education is delivered. Nellie Mae funded the Summit. James noted the impression that Tim Volk of the Vermont Business Roundtable had and the importance of the Roundtable’s presence at this event. He also discussed that other states like Kentucky are doing this as well, and that Vermont needs to articulate the Why and the How of this Transformation.

Ruff noted that there was not much argument that Vermont should or could do better. It was more a discussion of what to do in order to do better. Miller noted that the Board has a moral obligation to educate every child.

Romond asked if others who attended the Summit would like to comment. John Nelson of the Vermont School Board Association agrees with the characterizations. He said it was a serious group with a high level of concern, and it was a very candid discussion. He noted Tim Volk came at this as a public relations person and proposed the idea “No Dropouts” as the goal. This narrowed the focus, people were excited about this, and it allows one to come up with concrete steps. Vachon called it the “Hairy Audacious Goal” (as noted at the Summit as well). Stokes expanded that to say that they need a clear, compelling vision or theme that can be marketed and agreed upon.

Jeff Francis of the Vermont Superintendents Association also concurred. He was impressed with the commitment to improve public education by all attendees. It wasn't apparent what precisely the "what" is. There has not been consensus on the "what" to come up with actionable steps. There is a recognition that leadership is very important in this endeavor. There was unanimous agreement that we are involved in a change process. In order to effect that change, the WHY must have believability, the WHAT needs to resonate with people, and the HOW will need to resonate with people. When all is said and done, teachers, parents, kids etc. will be doing something different and will need to understand those three answers. Communicate Why, What and How. The Summit was a great first step.

Romond noted that the secondary transformation forum, based largely on High Schools on the Move, will be held November 20. All Board members are invited to attend.

Romond then noted the next steps:

1. The vision document draft is due October 24.
2. Engage broadly the governor and legislators.
3. This is not just an educational but a societal issue so involve other stakeholders like DCF, NGC, Poverty Council, etc.
4. Summit group will meet again.

The Board broke for lunch and reconvened at 1:06 p.m.

Item K: Rules/Regulations/Possible Legislation (Bill Talbott, Bill Romond, Kay Charron)

Bill Talbott explained the group's review of the rules and statutes through the lens of helping transformation. There is already existing flexibility and waiver power in the current rules, so the department should do a better job of making these options known and let the rules stand. Through what emerges from waiver requests received will help determine what, if anything, needs to be changed.

Kay Charron and Bill Romond spoke to the Board. They are both on the secondary transformation team. Kay has been involved in this effort before it was called Transformation. The goal of this discussion is to get direction from the Board regarding rules and regulations in the transformation context.

They proposed A Path to an "Education Transformation Act" (handout). They suggest to the Board that they take a higher level policy approach by appointing a policy commission that would recommend to the Board the policy framework. Charron recommended the Board choose a few specific policy topics on which to focus. Vachon asked that the Board be represented on this commission, which it will, as will practitioners. Larsen questioned what capacity the department has to do this work. The list of participants would include teacher, principal, curriculum coordinator, special educator, and teacher preparation educators from the higher education institutions. James asked if any of the associations with representatives present would be interested. Sherry Gile pointed out that if they involved someone from the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators they would fulfill more than one requirement because those folks are also practitioners. Jeff Francis spoke on the value of the commission and the assurance that there are not predetermined outcomes.

Charron reiterated the idea of choosing a few critical, strategic areas to focus on to drive transformation. The Board agreed to the formation of a Transformation Policy Commission. An

outline for the work of the commission, including goals, expectations, membership and timeline will be brought to the November meeting.

Item L: Career and Technical Education – Update (David White, John Fischer)

Dave White explained the case for the need for transformation, the need for multiple pathways, career readiness, and seamless transitions from pre-k to employment. John Fischer then spoke on Kay Charron and Doug Webster's roles to the career and technical education (CTE) work of the department. He discussed the Perkins IV federal legislation and the recent updates. Career and Technical Education is an essential piece to providing pathways for all students to succeed. The department's CTE team is also partnered with the Workforce Development Council and works with building, green technology and other organizations.

Item M: Moving Forward (David Ruff, Co-Director, Great Schools Project; Board members, Bill Talbott, Bill Romond)

Bill Romond and David Ruff spoke to the Board to wrap up the Transformation discussion. Ruff led the Board in an exercise to envision what transformed schools might look like. He led the group in the Futures Protocol exercise just as the Summit participants did in Grafton. He asked them to describe what the school system is like as though it were 2018. He read from some of the participant visions to encourage the Board to see commonalities.

Commonalities included flexibility (schedules, learning environments), learning outside of the school building, new roles for teachers (advisor, facilitators), real-time progress assessments. Some things the Board came up with included still having direct instruction at least in a portion of the day, smaller buildings, fewer teachers, facilitation of online learning, learning environment could be home or work, assessment weekly online, high school pupils design course of study, increased options for higher education and college, numerous possibilities and as they go they can narrow it down, no student falls through cracks, all students successful, plus keeping many of the themes from the previous documents such as "The Transformation of Education".

Ruff then challenged the Board to think about how this came to be; what happened to make this a reality. Between their list and the list from the Summit of commonalities, he asked the Board to share what they felt were the three to five crucial things that had to happen in order to make transformation happen. He asked them to think about the implications of this for the Board and department.

Those things were:

- By 2015, number of districts reduced from current number
- Student involvement and voice greatly expanded
- DOE and SBE key leadership
- 2010 VTNEA, SBE, DOE, Legislature worked to do some form of merit pay
- Hard at first, those clung to familiar but once underway saw the value
- Expansion of use of technology
- Realign and rethink role of teachers
- Assessment system revamped.

How does this affect your work as a Board:

- Standards need to be clearly mapped out because with Personalized Learning plans the standards still have to be met.

- Teacher licensing needed to be more flexible, but accountable.
- SBE needs to provide leadership (commissionership, reaching out beyond talking at meetings to other, support DOE, not dictating, bring others together).

Ruff closed by talking about the Maine initiative in which every student has a laptop and the positive impact that has. The students have organized their lives around it for the better.

James handed out the future agenda list.

Items H and I were held for a future agenda.

November 18 – the Governor interviewing commissioners nearby. The November 18 agenda will not be too concrete yet. November 17 will be the all day interviews with the commissioner candidates.

Motion: At 2:30 p.m., Susan Schill moved, Fayneese Miller seconded, that the Board move back into executive session to continue the discussion from earlier. The Board came out of executive session at 3:25 p.m.

No action was taken.

At 3:30 p.m., Ruth Stokes moved, Susan Schill seconded, to adjourn the October 21, 2008 meeting of the State Board of Education.

Item P: Written Report: East Haven School (Standards & Assessment Team)

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick
Minutes prepared by Carol King